

Master of Fine Arts Degree Thesis Report

O Horizon

Presented to the Faculty of the Art Department

University of Alaska Fairbanks

By

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May 2015

MFA Thesis Exhibition

O Horizon

April 3-28, 2015

Well Street Art Company

Public Presentation 4-5pm on Thursday, April 2, 2015

Murie Building Auditorium, University of Alaska Fairbanks

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My paintings and prints depicting views of the Alaskan landscape represent the quiet unpretentious beauty of a land so often revered for its grandeur. I am most inspired by what I observe on a daily basis. Rather than seeking out grand vistas and dramatic scenery I am drawn to humble roadside trees, wild weedy plant-life, snow cover and the unique light of the Interior. I focus on smaller elements of the landscape such as the bark of a tree, lichens, twigs and groundcover (figure 1). Seasonal changes are also of great interest. Our seasons are dramatic and they come and go



Figure 1. Gail Priday, *Bunchberry*, 30" x 40", oil on canvas, 2014

with a force that is hard to miss. Like many painters of the northern landscape who have come before me, I feel an urgency to capture those changes. Melting snow, the new mud of



Figure 2. Gail Priday, *Late Winter*, 24" x 30", oil on canvas, 2013

spring, falling leaves, ripening berries, low winter light and long shadows in the snow are frequent subjects in my work (figure 2). I see the same landscape outside my windows every day. I walk past the same trees and hillsides, yet the view keeps changing. The view changes with the sun and clouds and from season to season. The subject matter I choose to represent is carefully

selected and is intended to call attention to the features I find most compelling about the northern landscape.

I have been driven by this aesthetic since 2002 when I first came to Alaska, ten years before entering the MFA program at UAF. For as long as I have known this place, I have been moved by the light, the seasons and the easily overlooked details that make up this vast land. Yet my work is equally about form. The way it is composed holds the same weight as the subject, if not more. The manner in which paint is applied, the saturation of color and the contrast of small details with larger flat areas are very deliberate. Every mark is carefully considered and formal decisions are often made favoring principles of design as opposed to reality. I am not interested in producing exact representations. Instead, I strive to produce images that are clearly recognizable and accurate yet painterly. My paintings and prints call attention to the exquisite and unassuming components of the northern landscape while making a visual impact through my use of color and composition.

Background

I am not from Alaska. I grew up in Morris County, New Jersey and have lived in several other East Coast states. I grew up wanting to be an artist. Drawing and making things were my favorite activities. When I was four a friend asked me how I got to be so good at coloring. My response was that you have to get up every day and color, color, color. I was also fortunate to have parents who encouraged my interest and to live in close proximity to New York City. I visited art museums frequently with my family and also on school trips. There is power in seeing art treasured. It forms the idea in one's mind that art is important enough to be housed in a spectacular building, guarded at all times and visited by people from all over the world.

I studied art and art education as an undergraduate at James Madison University in

Virginia. Upon graduation I began teaching art in the public schools in Maryland while working toward a Master of Education in Art Education from Towson University in the evenings.

Teaching art was, and continues to be, a career that I find very fulfilling. After teaching for four years in Maryland my husband's career brought us to Fairbanks, Alaska.

While New Jersey is not the industrial wasteland it is often reputed to be, it does differ from Alaska significantly. Those differences have had an influence on my work. I arrived in Alaska in midsummer and was immediately captivated by the endless trees and overgrown yards. Most places I had lived or spent time in were much more manicured and contained. No one seemed to mow their lawns or prune trees and spend their weekends working in the yard in Fairbanks. My life up to this point was not devoid of natural beauty at all, but here it was just different, bigger and more wild. That sense of summer bursting with life struck a chord. Like so many others before me, I fell under the spell of the far north. Everything was new, exciting and larger than life. Winter was just as captivating. The soft blue snow, the glowing orange sunlight and the intense stillness and cold were and continue to be so exhilarating. It was not only on adventurous excursions or trips to the mountains that I felt awestruck. It was on walks in the woods near home that I have always been overwhelmed by the natural wonders of Interior Alaska. Robert Service—Alaska's beloved, "Bard of the Yukon", describes so perfectly the way Alaska takes hold of so many of us in his poem *The Spell of the Yukon*.

... The snows that are older than history,
 The woods where the weird shadows slant;
 The stillness, the moonlight, the mystery,
 I've bade 'em good-by—but I can't.

-Robert Service, from *Spell of the Yukon*, 1907

Influences

I am not the first artist to find inspiration in northern landscapes, nor will I be the last. I have found a sense of connection to and a source of inspiration from other artists who have chosen to depict similar subjects. The northern landscape is difficult to ignore. It is grand, dramatic and far from ordinary. I connect most with those who have been awestruck by the northern scenery and have made it the subject of their work, particularly those who focus on the vegetation and the effects of light and seasons on their intimate surroundings. These artists influence my work because they paint or have painted similar subjects in a style that interests me. It is important to note that the subject matter alone is not sufficient. I do not respond to all representations of the northern landscape with the same enthusiasm. It is the expressive qualities of certain works that are most inspiring. Thickly applied paint, highly saturated or exaggerated colors and simplified forms are what I crave. The artists who inspire me do not paint every detail nor do they strive for exact likenesses. Instead, they create paintings of subjects that are familiar and descriptive of the north in ways that express the individuality of the maker and convey an emotional response to the subject. When I view their work I sense a way of seeing and responding to the landscape that is a unique vision, yet also similar to my own.

A notable group of artists associated with the north in the twentieth century would be the Canadian Group of Seven. The entire motivation of the group was to paint the Canadian landscape and invent an art movement in Canada that was unique to that land as opposed to creating art in the style of Europeans at that time. Much of the Canadian wilderness was not regarded as a place worthy of painting. The Group of Seven challenged this viewpoint. The group was formed in 1920. The members were Franklin Carmichael, Lawren Harris,

Alexander Young Jackson, Frank H. Johnston, Arthur Lismer, J.E.H. MacDonald and Frederick Varley. The group was formed in Toronto. Though they later travelled and painted across the country they are known most for their work throughout Ontario and especially in the Algoma district and Algonquin Provincial Park.

Although Tom Thompson (1877-1917) died before the Group of Seven officially formed, he is often associated with the group. In his memoir, A.Y. Jackson wrote,

To most people Thompson's country was a monotonous dreary waste, yet out of one little stretch he found riches undreamed of. Not knowing all the conventional definitions of beauty, he found it all beautiful: muskeg, burnt and drowned land, log chutes, beaver dams, creeks, wild rivers and placid lakes, wild flowers, northern lights, the flight of wild geese and the changing seasons from spring to summer to autumn...Seldom, in his painting, is there a feeling of being tied down to a particular place...He gave us the fleeting moment, the mood, the haunting memory of things he felt (Jackson 33).

Upon viewing Thompson's work, it would be difficult to dispute Jackson's words. Thompson painted moments such as *Winter Thaw in the Woods* (1917), (figure 3). I connect with the subjects he painted as well as his treatment of light and shadows on the snow and the spaces of light through the trees. I have never consciously tried to emulate Thompson's work, but do see similarities in certain works.

Lawren Harris (1885-1970), a founding member of the Canadian Group of Seven had a long career as a painter and is considered one of Canada's most influential artists. His style evolved over the course of his career. His early works show evidence of being influenced by



Figure 3. Tom Thompson, *Winter Thaw in the Woods*, oil on canvas, 1917

the Impressionists. These decorative landscapes gave way to a more simple and stark interpretation of the northern landscape.

After the Group dissolved in 1933, Harris turned toward geometric abstraction and an exploration of the spiritual in art. Harris was a prolific painter and painted a variety of subjects. I am most inspired by the paintings that evoke familiarity with the Alaskan landscape, especially those with a limited view. *Tamarack Swamp, Algoma* (figure 4) is an example of a painting of a



Figure 4. Lawren Harris, *Tamarack Swamp, Algoma*, oil on canvas, 1920

setting that could be perceived as ordinary or possibly even unattractive. Harris frequently chose to paint subjects that have an everyday quality and made them into beautiful works of

art. His humble scenes are evidence of the immense beauty he found in the everyday setting of his northern home as well as a way for him to express spiritual values and ideas.



Figure 5. Emily Carr, *Red Tree*, oil on board, 1938

Emily Carr (1871-1945) was also a Canadian painter who is often associated with the Group of Seven. She is best known for her works depicting Canada's west coast. She was influenced by the landscape and by the First Nations cultures in British Columbia and also Alaska. I am most inspired by her paintings of forests. She had a way of making her forest landscapes feel magical with her swirling

whimsical brushwork and glowing light. The sense of love and awe for the places she painted comes through so readily (figure 5).

Closer in distance and in years, works by Alaskan artists David Mollett and Kesler Woodward have influenced my work. Mollett describes the landscape with pure bold colors. He simplifies the forms and does not include any unnecessary visual information. I admire the way he so accurately represents depth and space within the landscape with such purity. As a result of working with him for the last three



Figure 6. David Mollett, *Suntrana*, 40" x 50", oil on canvas, 2014

years I have learned to pay careful attention to variations in value and to place an emphasis

on shapes over lines. He has pointed out the importance of giving attention to not only the large parts of a painting, but the small features as well (figure 6).



Figure 7. Kesler Woodward, *Radiance*, 48" x 60", acrylic on canvas, 2014

Kesler Woodward, like others I have mentioned, is endlessly inspired by his surroundings and captivated by the changes in light and snowfall and growth. He sees his

paintings of trees as portraits and his works point out the scars, imperfections and individual characteristics of each tree. Over the years I have frequently sought out his paintings in public places to get a closer look. From him I have learned to make a painting interesting from far

away, but to also give the viewer a treat of textures and small details when they walk up to view it more closely (figure 7).

At this time in my career I am clearly inspired by a specific subject, the northern landscape. However, underlying any theme or subject, are certain stylistic qualities and ideas that influence my work. These qualities exist regardless of the subject I am painting. I am influenced by many paintings of subjects outside the realm of northern landscapes. The stylistic qualities that I place the highest value on in my



Figure 8. Henri Matisse, *Landscape at Collioure*, 15" x 18", oil on canvas, 1905

work are color, balance and decorative rhythms. The works and theories of the Fauves, especially Fauve landscapes, have contributed significantly to my aesthetic and to my ideas about painting. Fauvism was a short-lived movement in France from 1899-1908 led by Henri Matisse (figure 8). The Fauves used pure color and simplified forms to create strong and unified compositions. For them, the purpose of color was to create a mood or to add structure and balance to a painting. "One of Fauvism's major contributions to modern art was its radical goal of separating color from its descriptive representational purpose and allowing it to exist on the canvas as an independent element" (Wolf, 2). Like the Fauves, I use color as a form of personal expression and an emotional response to nature. It represents my feelings about the subject and creates harmony in a deliberate decorative way.

I have been influenced by these and other artists and art movements, but my work is

autonomous. The Fauves were known for using paint straight from the tubes, interested in only the purest pigments. I rarely use colors straight from the tube. I spend a great deal of time creating specific colors for both my paintings and prints. The Fauves were dramatic with their disregard for representational color. The colors I use are representational, yet exaggerated. The bright sunny French landscapes painted by the Fauves are much more intense than my northern snowscapes. Even our brushwork is different. The Fauves are known for active and spontaneous brushwork while my brushwork alternates between active and painstaking. Influences do not exist to be simulated. Instead, multiple influences, many subconscious, come together to form a unique aesthetic.

O Horizon

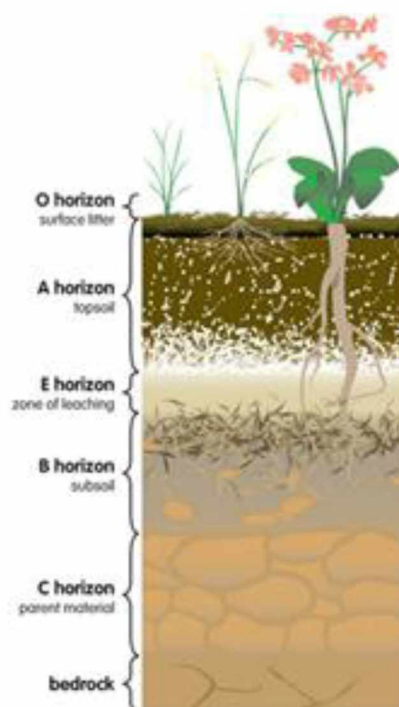


Figure 9. O Horizon Diagram

I chose to title my MFA Thesis Exhibition, *O Horizon*, because so many of the pieces I have produced over the course of the program focus on the ground. The term O Horizon refers to the surface litter on the forest floor. Soil is comprised of distinct horizontal layers called soil horizons (figure 9). These horizons range from surface litter and topsoil to underlying layers high in rock content. The O horizon, also known as the organic horizon, is the top layer comprised of large amounts of organic material and leaf litter. It is this top layer of loose leaves, spruce needles and organic debris in various stages of decomposition that I

have used as a springboard for this collection of paintings and prints. In my work, this concept of the forest floor is extended to include the plants, trees, cones and leaves that contribute to the O horizon.



Figure 10. Gail Priday, *Midsummer*, 30" x 40", oil on canvas, 2015

Landscape painters often portray a broad view. With this body of work I limit the field of vision. I want people to feel that they are sitting on the forest floor or standing face to face with a towering spruce. The painting *Midsummer* (figure 10) enlarges the small ground plants, fallen leaves and mosses. I took a small plot of the forest floor and

enlarged it to call attention to the colors and forms of a very ordinary summer sight. I strive to create a sense of familiarity with viewers. Anyone who has walked in the woods in and around Fairbanks can recognize the imagery. I painted this particular view because of the intense green of the forest in midsummer. The magnitude of life in the summer is in such contrast with the very place during the winter. I composed this piece from the viewpoint of sitting on the



Figure 11. Gail Priday, *Hillside Shadows*, 30" x 40", oil on canvas, 2013

forest floor to emphasize the easily overlooked aspects of the landscape. The Interior is covered in snow from October through April and often into May. I have included several paintings and prints that focus on the ground in the winter months in

addition to those exploring the flora and its cycle of growth and decay. In these pieces, evidence of plant-life peek through the heavily shadowed snow cover. *Hillside Shadows* (figure 11) is almost entirely about the patterns on the snow created by the shadows of trees, branches and footsteps. The horizon line is near the top of the canvas, emphasizing the importance of the snow shadows. The return of longer days is a hopeful time. I love the quiet blue of deep winter, but when I start to see sunlight pouring through the windows, illuminating previously unnoticed dust, I realize how much I have missed the sun. It is also around this time of year that the warmth of the sun can be felt on your face. This painting, as well as the other snow shadow paintings, is a tribute to the return of longer days and the warming power of the sun.



Figure 12. Gail Priday, *O Horizon*, 30" x 40", oil on canvas, 2013

My MFA exhibit consists of twelve oil paintings ranging in size from 24" x 30" to 36" x 48" and twelve prints. Of the prints, there are two reduction linocuts, eight reduction woodcuts and two multicolor serigraphs. Printmaking allows me to express my paintings in a new way. I often use a painting as a starting point

for a print. After a painting has been worked for a number of weeks it becomes ingrained in my mind. I feel that I know the subject well and I am not quite ready to let it go. As you navigate the gallery you will find evidence of this re-use. I find the challenge of expressing the same subject using different mediums exciting. In order to take an image from painting to

print, I must simplify the composition and reduce the colors. Sometimes the relationship is subtle as with *O Horizon* (figure 12) and *Cranberry Woods* (figure 13). In others, such as the painting *Mud and Buds* (figure 14) and the print, *Spring* (figure 15), the relationship is quite clear.

O Horizon, the 30" x 40" painting which shares the exhibit's title, brings viewers down to ground level to experience the decaying branches, leaf litter and small ground plants that cover the forest floor during the Interior's brief golden autumn. This viewpoint is intended to cause the observer to feel as if they are sitting on the damp ground in the seemingly endless forest. The branches on the ground are wet and decaying, the fireweed has dried out and the highbush cranberries have reached the pinnacle of ripeness. Yellow foliage and light illuminate the background. It will not be long before the wind blows the gold from the trees, the berries shrivel and everything is covered in snow. The foreground of this painting is complicated and full of patterns and movement. Certain leaves, such as the yellow cluster on the right, are intentionally flat. These small flat areas provide contrast to the intricate branches and dried leaves around them, allowing the eyes to rest. The flatness of the yellow leaves also keeps the attention on their shape as the branch climbs in front of the dark tree trunk. Veins and color variations are unnecessary here, instead it is the beautiful form of the leaves and the contrast of bright yellow against dark purple that I chose to emphasize. In the background, the trees are simple forms. This atmospheric perspective creates a sense of depth. Texture variations range from smooth and flat to thick impasto.

Materials and techniques can shape the final piece due to the strengths and limitations of the media. Oil paint allows for an endless range of richly saturated colors, texture variations, fine details and endless opportunities to make changes. Woodcuts offer a

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number of design possibilities that range from crudely cut and expressive to intricate and refined. For me, the nature of the medium requires that I plan extensively before jumping in, carefully considering every cut. The design must be simple and the colors, though rich, must be few. The result is an image distilled to its most necessary colors and forms. *Cranberry*



Figure 13. Gail Priday, *Cranberry Woods*, 9" x 12", Reduction Woodcut, 2014

Woods is a reduction woodcut depicting the woods during the same brief period of golden autumn as the painting, *O Horizon*. The yellow sky is similar in both the painting and the print. The most notable differences exist in the foreground foliage. The red cranberry leaves in the print are all of the same color whereas in the painting there are as many as ten distinct tints and shades of red used on the different leaves. The dried fireweed crackles and twists through the painting, broken down into many small shapes of color, giving it a three dimensional quality and convincing texture. In the print, the fireweed leaves are represented only by the distinct shape of the leaves and a single orange-brown color. Berries hover in the print, unattached to the plants and the idea of a forest floor thick after an intense growing season is represented by vertical lines peeking through the fallen yellow leaves. The trees all share the same color palette, which is rarely the case in life or in my paintings. Of the sixteen tree trunks making up the background in *O Horizon*, very few of them share an exact color. *Cranberry Woods* contains a total of nine colors. The painting is comprised of too many colors to count.



Figure 14. Gail Priday, *Mud and Buds*, 24" x 30", oil on canvas, 2013

Mud and Buds (24" x 30") is the only painting in this body of work depicting the brief season of spring (figure 14). The transition from winter to summer happens so quickly in the Interior that spring is easy to overlook. The snow melts, mud and puddles take its place and suddenly pale green buds emerge and they are

buds for only a short time. In years past I have missed my opportunity to paint this blissful time of year. This painting began as a watercolor sketch in the field and was turned into a larger oil painting in my studio. I was drawn to this particular scene because it is so representative of spring in Alaska. A tiny pile of snow remains un-melted in the upper right, while the remaining hillside is covered in mud.



Figure 15. Gail Priday, *Spring*, 11" x 15", Serigraph, 2105

The tiny green buds on the branches are proof that before long, the forest will once again be green. It is the cyclical nature of the seasons and the sense of reliability they offer that I want to acknowledge. Knowing that every year the snow will melt, horsetails will emerge, the forest will turn green and then gold is comforting. The dependability of the seasons creates structure in our lives. The serigraph, *Spring* (figure 15) was designed from the painting. It is not intended to be an exact replication. I work with the strengths of each medium to produce the strongest image possible. The print is made up of thirteen colors and therefore a more simplified version of the original.

The subjects of my paintings often play an important role in the development of my prints. Over the course of the program it has become clear that my prints have had an influence on my paintings. My earlier paintings tend to be less vibrant and focus more on gradations of color and line. My current paintings are much brighter and bolder and are comprised of areas of color. This evolution in style is directly related to the thinking process used in designing prints.

Process

As a painter, I employ several methods of painting. Much of the work I do is completely *en plein air* which means I paint in the field from start to finish. This is a direct method of painting and these works end up with a looser style. In the Interior, the season for painting outdoors is short and often rich with mosquitoes. When the conditions are unfavorable I set my easel up in front of a window to achieve the same type of painting. Working directly from life is the truest way to see a subject. The pieces painted directly from life tend to have a spacial quality that is airy and authentic. Variations in value are most evident when working from direct observation and it is difficult to recreate the airy characteristics and values when working solely from a photograph.

Not all of my paintings are done in the field or in front of a window, from start to finish. Many are painted in the studio. Often my paintings start in the field as drawings or quick watercolors. I also take photographs and bring leaves and branches or other objects back to the studio. My paintings end up being a combination of these things. The paintings I do in the studio are usually larger than those painted in the field and more emphasis is placed on details.

I use water-soluble oil paints. Water soluble oil paint, also called "water miscible" or "water mixable" is a modern variety of oil paint that has been designed to be thinned and cleaned up with water, as opposed to solvents. Water-soluble oil paint can be mixed and applied using the same techniques as traditional oil-based paint. The colors, drying time, and feel of the paint are no different than traditional oils. The ease of clean up allows me to work from home.

There are many types of printmaking and I have explored a number of them. I have chosen to focus on relief prints, specifically reduction woodcuts, and multicolor serigraphy because of the vibrant colors and bold design potential. My multicolored reduction prints are made from a single block of wood. In a traditional multicolored woodcut, each color would come from a different block. Multiple blocks allow the printmaker to make more than one edition. With the reduction method, you carve each color away, so once you print the final color, the block becomes obsolete. There is some drama in this process which adds to the excitement.

A painting can have hundreds of colors. For me, a reduction print should have no more than ten. I must carefully plan the design and think in terms of shapes of color rather than gradations and lines. After the paper has been measured and cut, I punch holes across the top that correspond to raised holes, called pins, that are attached to my jig. The jig holds the block in the exact same place each time I print while the pins keep the paper in the same place. This is called registration. It is easy to knock a print off registration. When this happens the colors do not line up correctly. Sometimes the discrepancy is barely noticeable, but more often a registration error ruins a print.

Once the registration is established and the paper is ready, I set to work carving. I



Figure 16. Carving the Block, 2014.

carve away all the areas that are to remain the color of the paper (figure 16). Then I ink up the block with the lightest color and place the block in the jig under the carefully registered paper. The block and paper are now ready to go through the press. Once it has rolled through the press the paper can be removed from the block and the print

checked for accuracy. If everything looks the way it should, I hang the print to dry and repeat this process with all the other sheets of paper. After the first color has been printed on every sheet of paper it is time to carve the block again. I carve away everything intended to stay the color I just printed, ink the block with the next color and repeat the printing process. After every sheet of paper has been printed with the second color, it is time once again to carve away the areas intended to remain the color just printed. This process of carving and printing continues until the print is complete.

Many technical decisions need to be made during this process. The order of inking colors is important as some colors will lose their vibrancy if they are layered over darker colors. Yet while working lightest to darkest will ensure color purity, it is not always so simple. Often the darkest colors are planned for the smallest most detailed areas. Leaving those areas until the very end leaves very little inked wood for the paper to stick to and often leads to registration issues. Also, it is much simpler to carve a thin twig than it is to carve away everything around a thin twig. These are a few examples of the types of problems that arise. An artist must also be a problem solver, make many mistakes and gain a thorough

understanding of the materials in order to master the medium.

Woodcuts are a form of relief printmaking. Once the block has been carved the image

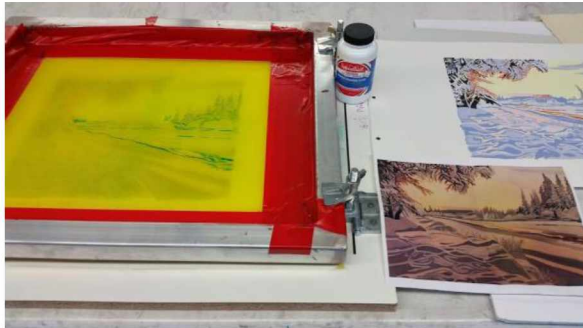


Figure 17. Drawing fluid method.

comes from the areas of the block that are raised, or have not been carved away.

Serigraphy, also known as silkscreen or screen-printing is the other technique I use for making prints. This method employs a screen, which is a thin mesh fabric tightly stretched over a frame.

The artist can use a variety of means to block out areas of the screen creating a stencil. Paper is placed under the screen and ink is pulled across the top using a squeegee. The blocked out parts of the screen do not allow ink to pass through. The image is printed on the paper below the screen. There are many ways to create a stencil or block out areas on the screen and I have used a number of them. For the work in this exhibit I used drawing fluid and screen filler to create my multicolored images. Just as a jig is used for a reduction woodcut, a jig is needed when making a screen print ensure that the paper is always placed in exactly the same place so that every color appears where intended. The image is created one color at a time. While reduction woodcuts are a reductive process, multicolor serigraphy is additive. Drawing fluid is painted onto the areas of the screen where I want ink to come through (figure 17). After allowing the drawing fluid time to dry, screen filler is squeegeed across the screen. Once it has dried the screen is taken to the sink and rinsed. The screen filler stays on the screen while the drawing fluid washes away. The screen filler acts as a stencil and only the places that were painted with drawing fluid will allow ink to pass through. Once it has dried thoroughly, the screen can be secured to the jig

and paper placed underneath secure to the registration pins. Ink is squeezed across the top and comes through the open areas on the screen onto the paper below. This is repeated on every sheet of paper. The screen must then be sprayed with a power washer to remove all ink and screen filler. Once it is completely cleared drawing fluid can be painted onto the screen again where the next color is to come through. The screen filler is again applied and the process repeats until every color has been printed.

Conclusion

I received a great deal of positive feedback on the exhibit. The paintings were spread out on three walls and the prints were hung salon style on the fourth

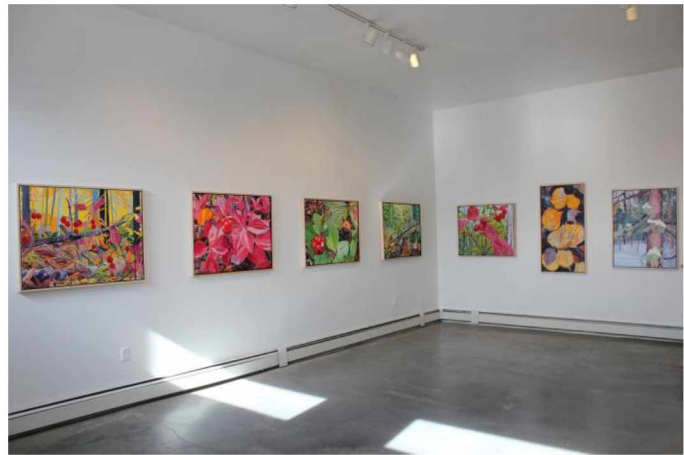


Figure 18. Paintings in the gallery.

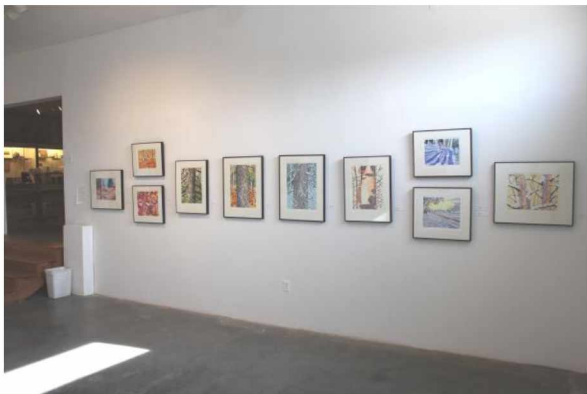


Figure 19. Prints in the gallery.

wall (figures 18 and 19). Seeing the work all together in one room was exciting, the visual impact was strong. Paintings were grouped according to color and scale. It was helpful to hear others articulate their impressions of the work and the arrangement. Kesler Woodward, Professor of Art, Emeritus at the University of

Alaska Fairbanks, painter and author, was the outside observer for my MFA Thesis Presentation and Defense and he made an interesting observation. He has researched and

written about many Alaskan artists. He explained that when he sees a group of works by a single artist, particularly landscapes, he tries to determine what the artist's view of Alaska is or was. He asks how the artist's work expresses his or her feelings about Alaska. Using Sydney Laurence as an example he described how paintings by Laurence depict Alaska as a place where people are small and insignificant and nature is big and invulnerable. He pointed out that when viewing my work as a whole, he sees my view of Alaska as a friendly and safe place. While I have never before articulated my view of Alaska as safe and friendly, I feel that Woodward's view was very perceptive. Fairbanks is my home. It has become my place in the world. I love it because of the people, lifestyle, and natural beauty.

During my defense we also discussed the domestic quality of my subject matter and whether gender is a factor in my work. The fact that I have young children is a consideration in how I discovered the subjects for my current body of work. The need and desire to stay close to home, along with seeing the world through the eyes of my children, has led me to discover the potential in my own backyard.

After spending so much time committed to the work for this exhibit, it is exciting to think about what I will do next. I do not feel tired of my current subject matter, in fact I feel that there is still much to explore. I want to continue working with intimate views of the landscape while experimenting with scale. I tend to work within a certain range of canvas size and hope to explore both very large and very small paintings. I plan to spend my summer painting and drawing outdoors with no strict boundaries.

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Artist Statement

The O horizon, also known as the organic horizon, refers to the top layer of soil and surface litter in a woodland area. It is this layer of loose leaves, spruce needles and organic debris in various stages of decomposition that I have used as a springboard for this collection of paintings and prints. In my work, this concept of the forest floor is extended to include the plants, trees, cones and leaves that contribute to the O horizon.

Landscape painters often portray a broad view. With this body of work I limit the field of vision. I focus on smaller elements of the landscape such as the bark of a tree, lichens, berries, twigs and groundcover. My paintings and prints of the Alaskan landscape represent the quiet unpretentious beauty of a land revered for its grandeur. I am most inspired by what I observe on a daily basis. Rather than seeking out grand vistas and dramatic scenery I am drawn to humble roadside trees, wild weedy plant-life, snow cover and the unique light of the Interior. Seasonal changes are also of great interest. Our seasons are dramatic and they come and go with a force that is hard to miss. I see the same landscape outside my windows every day. I walk past the same trees and hillsides, yet the view keeps changing.

My work is equally about form. The way it is composed holds the same weight as the subject. The manner in which paint is applied, the saturation of color and the contrast of small details with larger flat areas are very deliberate. I am not interested in producing exact representations. Instead, I strive to produce images that are clearly recognizable and accurate, yet painterly.

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gail.e.priday@gmail.com
907.388.3937

Education

2015	M.F.A. Painting and Printmaking University of Alaska Fairbanks
2002	M.Ed. Art Education Towson University
1998	B.A. James Madison University
1996	Semester Abroad Florence, Italy

Grants/ Awards

2015	Awarded Thesis Completion Fellowship from UAF Graduate School
2013-14	UAF Wood Talent Grant Recipient
2012-14	Assistantship from UAF for M.F.A. Program
2013	Honorable Mention <i>64th Parallel</i> , Bear Gallery Fairbanks, AK
2012	Honorable Mention <i>64th Parallel</i> , Bear Gallery Fairbanks, AK
2012	Honorable Mention <i>Patterns of Influence</i> , Bear Gallery Fairbanks, AK

Solo Exhibitions

2015	<i>O Horizon</i> MFA Thesis Exhibition Well Street Art Co. Fairbanks, AK
2014	<i>Extrospection</i> Bear Gallery Fairbanks, AK
2013	<i>Alla Prima</i> Phillips Studio & Gallery Fairbanks AK
2012	<i>The Backyard</i> Keller Architecture & Allied Arts Fairbanks, AK
2012	<i>From the Ground Up</i> Phillips Studio & Gallery Fairbanks, AK

Juried Group Exhibitions

2013	<i>64th Parallel</i> Bear Gallery Fairbanks, AK honorable mention
	<i>Earth, Wind, Fire</i> International Arctic Research Center Fairbanks, AK
	<i>Views of the Boreal Forest</i> International Arctic Research Center Fairbanks, AK
2012	<i>64th Parallel</i> Bear Gallery Fairbanks, AK honorable mention
	<i>Patterns of Influence</i> Bear Gallery Fairbanks, AK honorable mention
2011	<i>64th Parallel</i> Bear Gallery Fairbanks, AK
2002-03	<i>64th Parallel</i> Bear Gallery Fairbanks, AK

1998 *Patterns of Influence* | Bear Gallery | Fairbanks, AK
 Sawhill Gallery | Harrisonburg, VA

Invitational Group Exhibitions

2014 *Fairbanks Printmakers* | Well Street Art Co. | Fairbanks, AK
 2012 UAF Master of Fine Arts Group Exhibition | UAF Art Gallery | Fairbanks, AK
 2001 *Art Teacher Invitational* | MD State Department of Education | Annapolis, MD

Group Exhibitions

2014 *Limited Edition* | Bear Gallery | Fairbanks, AK
 2012 *UAF Master of Fine Arts Group Exhibition* | UAF Art Gallery | Fairbanks, AK
 2008 Talbot County Visual Arts Center | Easton, MD
 2007 Dorchester Art center | Cambridge, MD
 Cambridge Visitors Center | Cambridge, MD
 2003 *Miniatures* | New Horizons Gallery | Fairbanks, AK

Public Art

2012 Design Proposal Selected for Public Art Project | *Paint the Pipes* | Fairbanks, AK
 <http://fairbanksalaska.com/paint-the-pipes/gail-priday>

Current Employment

University of Alaska Fairbanks | Thesis Completion Fellowship | M.F.A. Program

Teaching

2014 Instructor | Beginning Drawing | University of Alaska Fairbanks
 Instructor | Beginning Painting | University of Alaska Fairbanks
 2013 Instructor | Beginning Drawing | University of Alaska Fairbanks
 Instructor | Beginning Painting | University of Alaska Fairbanks
 2012 Instructor | Aesthetic Appreciation | University of Alaska Fairbanks

Selected Past Employment

2011-2012 Education Coordinator | Fairbanks Arts Association, Fairbanks, AK
 2002-2003 Adjunct Professor | University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, AK
 2002-2004 Sixth Grade Teacher | Catholic Schools of Fairbanks, Fairbanks, AK

1998–2002 Art Specialist | Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Annapolis, MD

Related Experience

2014–15 Instructor, Summer Art Camp | UAF Summer Sessions, Fairbanks, AK

2014 Invited Presenter | Alaska Art Education Association (AAEA), Fairbanks, AK

2014 Invited Presenter | Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, *Meet the Artist*, Fairbanks, AK

2012 Invited Presenter | *Integrating Art into the Classroom* | Chinook Montessori Charter School, Fairbanks, AK

2012 Coordinator and Presenter | Teaching Artist Training for Artist-In-Schools Residency Program | Fairbanks Arts Association

2011 Coordinator | *Up With Art Plus* | Organized and hung an exhibition of student work | Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center, Fairbanks, AK

2008–12 Coordinator | *Art in the Park* | Developed, coordinated and instructed a weekly art-centered program for young children | Cambridge, MD, Chestertown, MD, Fairbanks, AK

2008 Private Art Instructor | Chestertown, MD

2008 Art Instructor | *Pint Sized Picassos* | Kent County Parks and Recreation | Chestertown, MD

2002 Art Workshop Instructor | Fairbanks Community After School Program | Fairbanks, AK

2001 Art Workshop Instructor | Devised and instructed three summer art courses for Pre-K through fifth grade students | Anne Arundel County Recreation and Parks | Crofton, MD

2001 Art Curriculum Writer | Selected by Anne Arundel County Public Schools Art Coordinator to work with a select group of art instructors to write a new curriculum guide for the District. This curriculum guide was published for County art teachers and presented at the National Art Education Association Convention in March 2002 | Annapolis, MD

1999 Reading Instructor | Living Classrooms Foundation | Baltimore, MD

1997–1998 Art Instructor | James Madison University Summer Arts Program | Harrisonburg, VA



Lichen Woodland

40 x 30 inches

Oil on Canvas

2014



Leaf Litter

48 x 24 inches

Oil on Canvas

2013



March

24 x 48 inch

Oil on Canvas

2013



Bunchberry

30 x 40 inches

Oil on Canvas

2014



Overlooked

30 x 36 inches

Oil on Canvas

2015



Hillside Shadows

30 x 40 inches

Oil on Canvas

2013



O Horizon

30 x 40 inches

Oil on Canvas

2014



Midsummer

30 x 40 inches

Oil on Canvas

2015



Munchberry

30 x 40 inches

Oil on Canvas

2015



Late Winter

24 x 30 inches

Oil on Canvas

2013



Mud and Buds

24 x 30 inches

Oil on Canvas

2013



One Rosehip

36 x 48 inches

Oil on Canvas

2014



Autumn Spruce

18 x 15 inches

Reduction Woodcut

2014



Summer Spruce

16 x 12 inches

Reduction Woodcut

2013



Winter Spruce

18 x 15 inches

Reduction Woodcut

2015

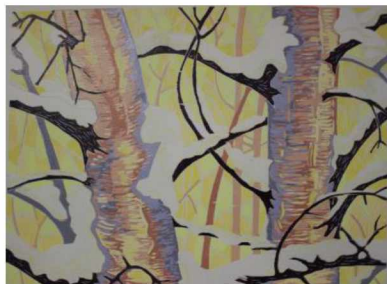


On the Ground

10 x 12 inches

Reduction Linocut

2014



Reaching Closure

12 x 16 inches

Reduction Woodcut

2014



Freezing Up

10 x 11 inches

Serigraph

2015



Cranberry Woods

9 x 12 inches

Reduction Woodcut

2014



Spring

11 x 15 inches

Serigraph

2015



Long Shadows

9 x 12 inches

Reduction Woodcut

2014



Tamarack

12 x 16 inches

Reduction Woodcut

2013



Peeling Birch

16 x 12 inches

Reduction Woodcut

2013



Snowscape, December

12 x 16 inches

Reduction Linocut

2014







4. *Bunchberry* / 30 x 40 inches/ oil on canvas/ 2014





5. *Overlooked* / 30 x 36 inches/ oil on canvas/ 2015



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6. *Hillside Shadows* / 30 x 40 inches/ oil on canvas/ 2013





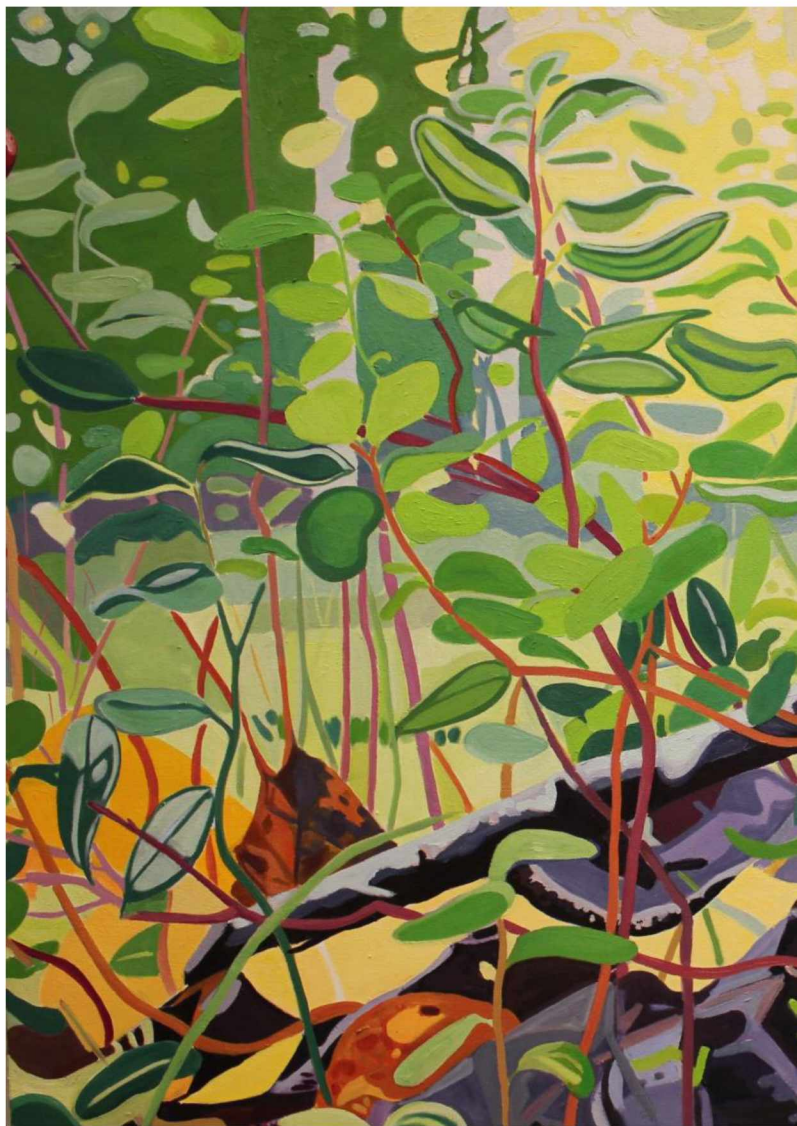
7. *O Horizon*/ 30 x 40 inches/ oil on canvas/ 2014



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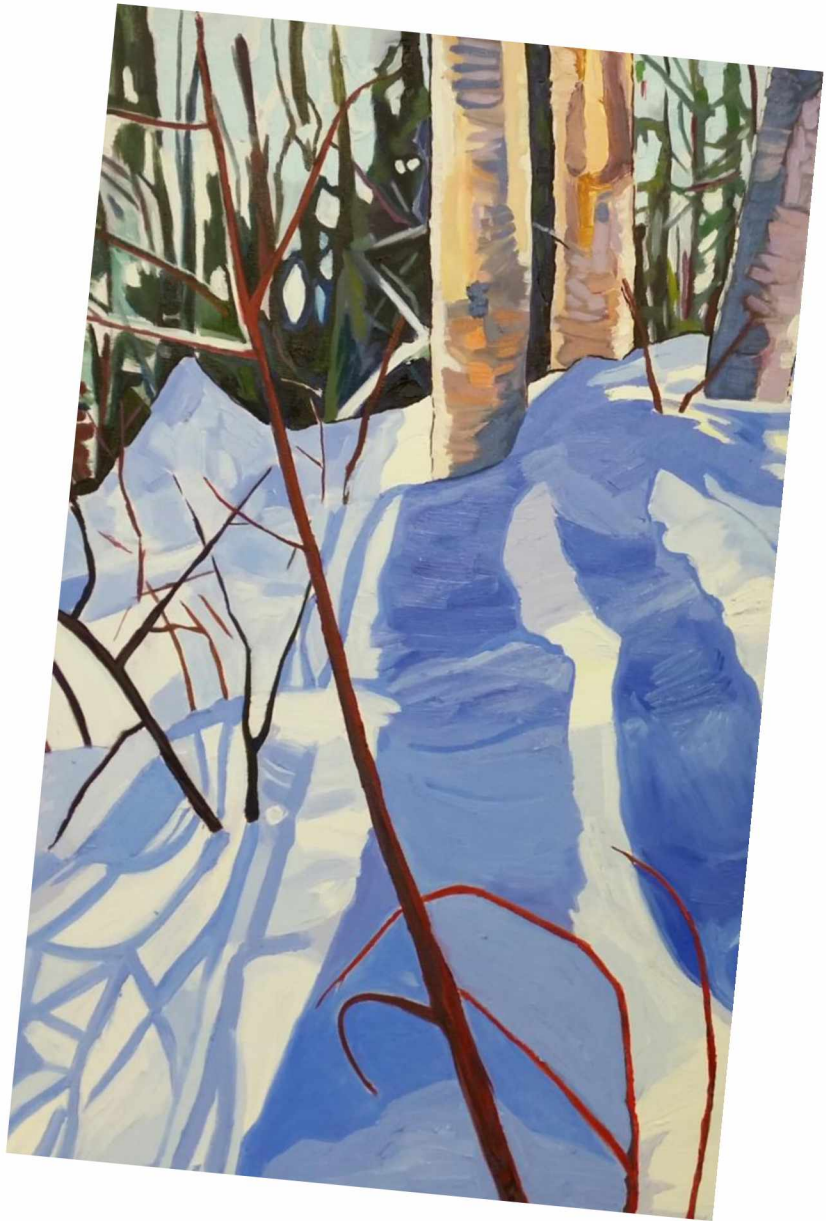
8. *Midsummer*/ 30 x 40 inches/ oil on canvas/ 2015







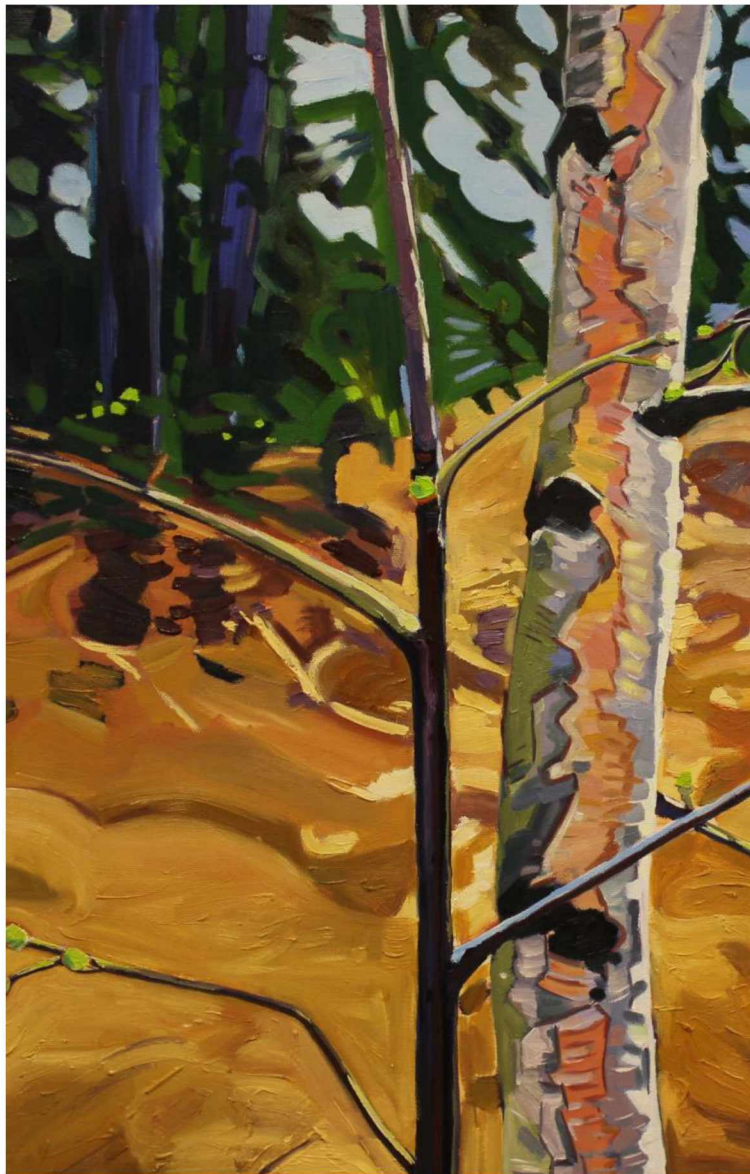
10. *Late Winter*/ 24 x 30 inches/ oil on canvas/ 2013

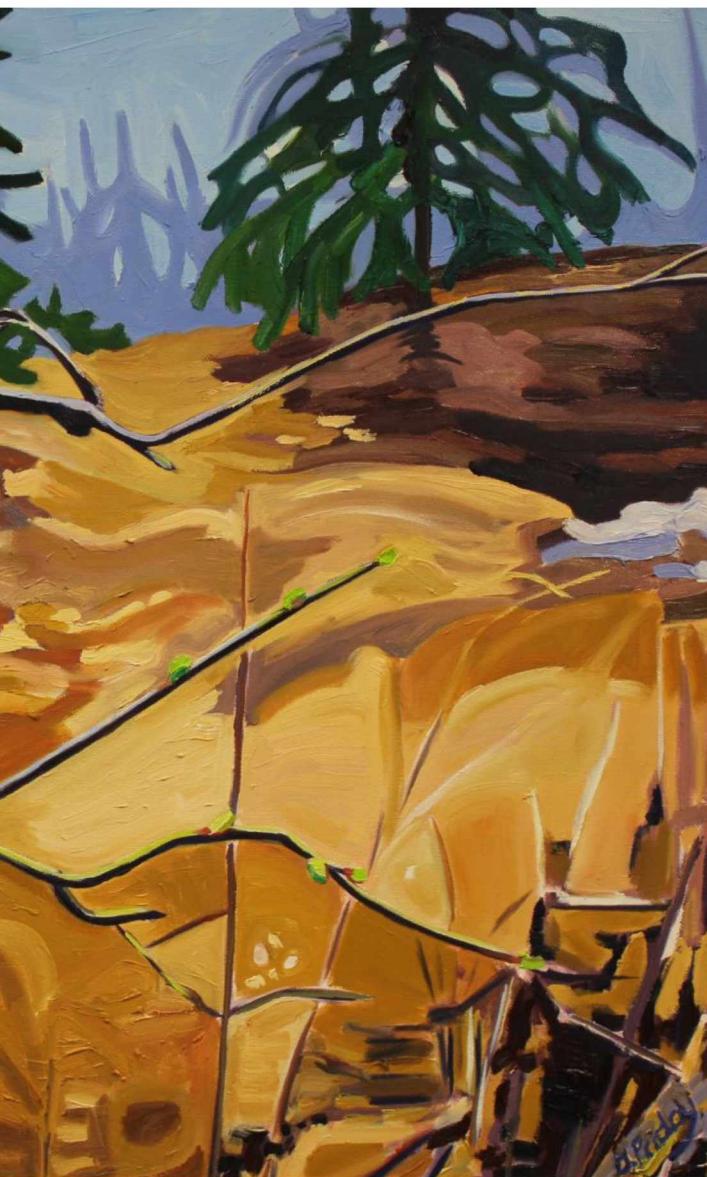


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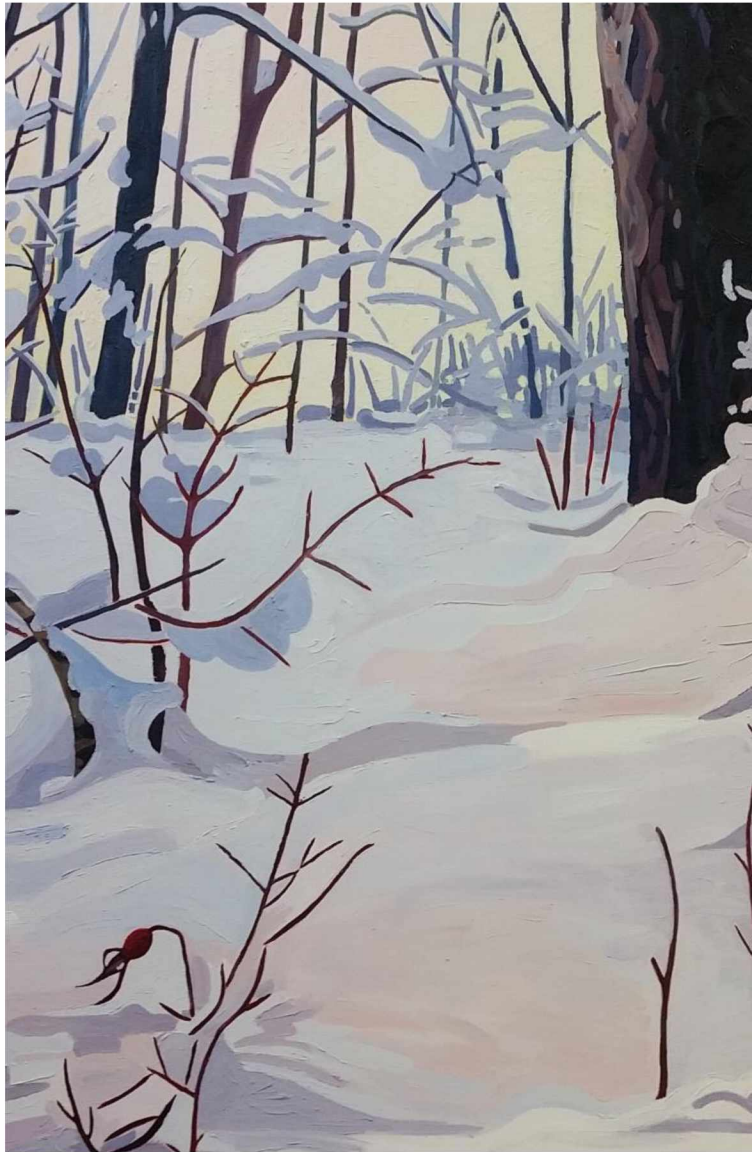


11. *Mud and Buds*/ 24 x 30 inches/ oil on canvas/ 2013





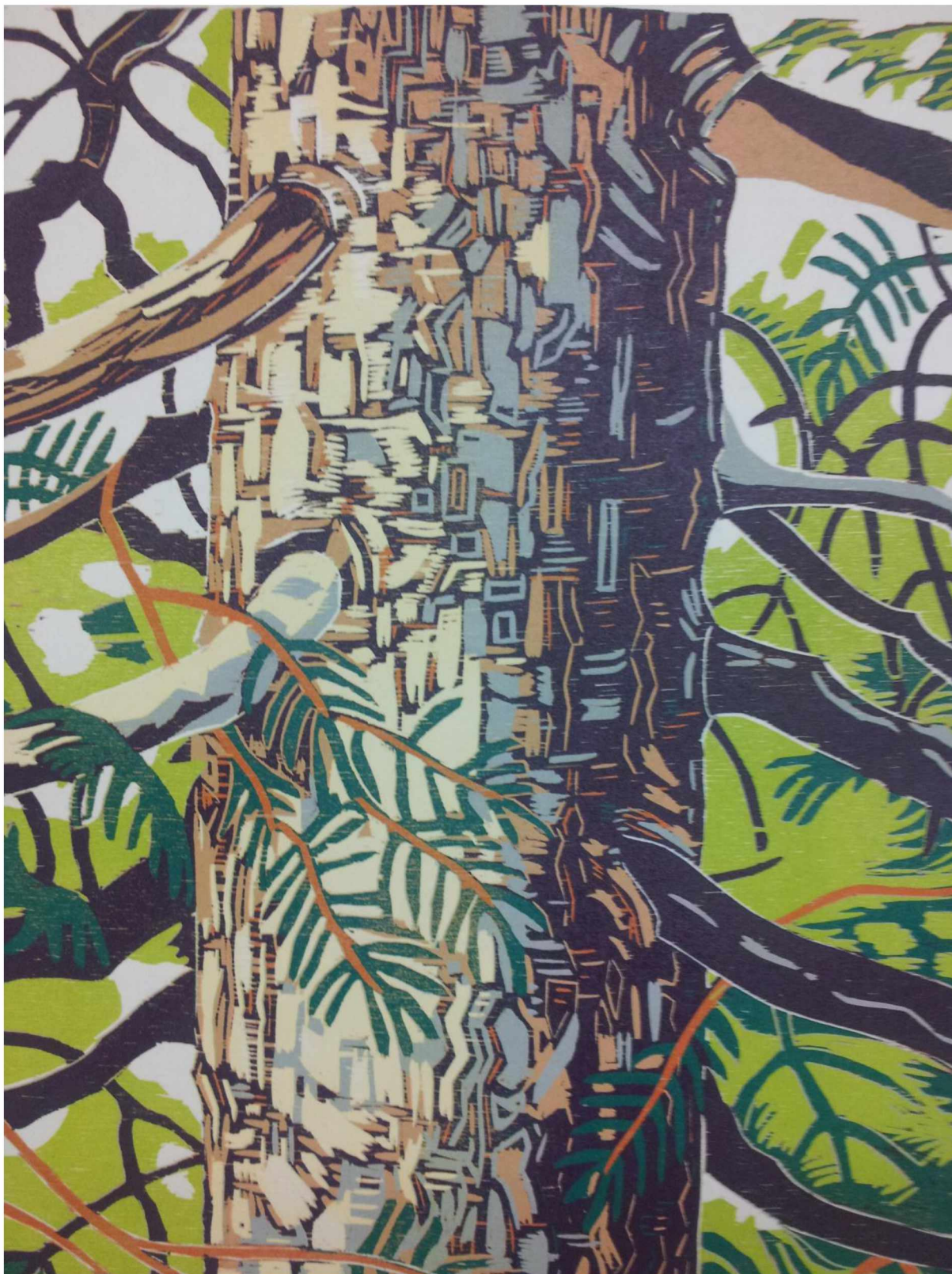
12. *One Rosehip*/ 36 x 48 inches/ oil on canvas/ 2014



Gail E. Priddy/ MFA Packet/ Appendix: Images/ May 2015









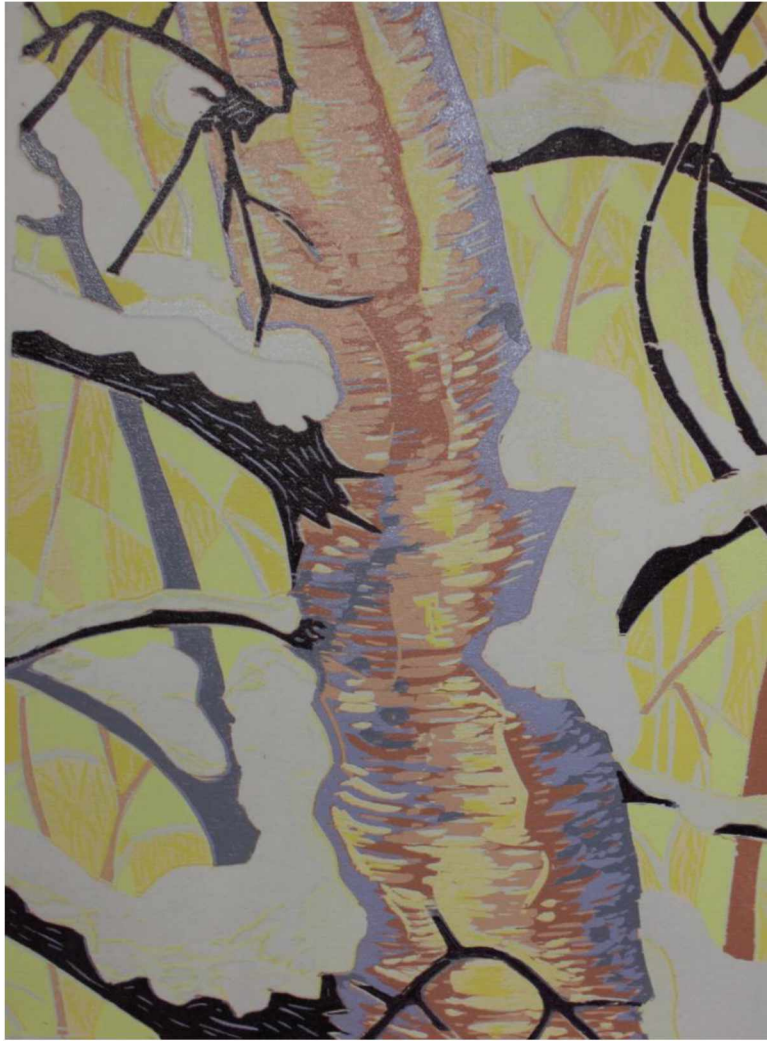
16. *On the Ground*/ 10 x 12 inches/ Reduction Linocut/ 2014



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17. *Reaching Closure*/ 12 x 16 inches/ Reduction Woodcut/ 2014









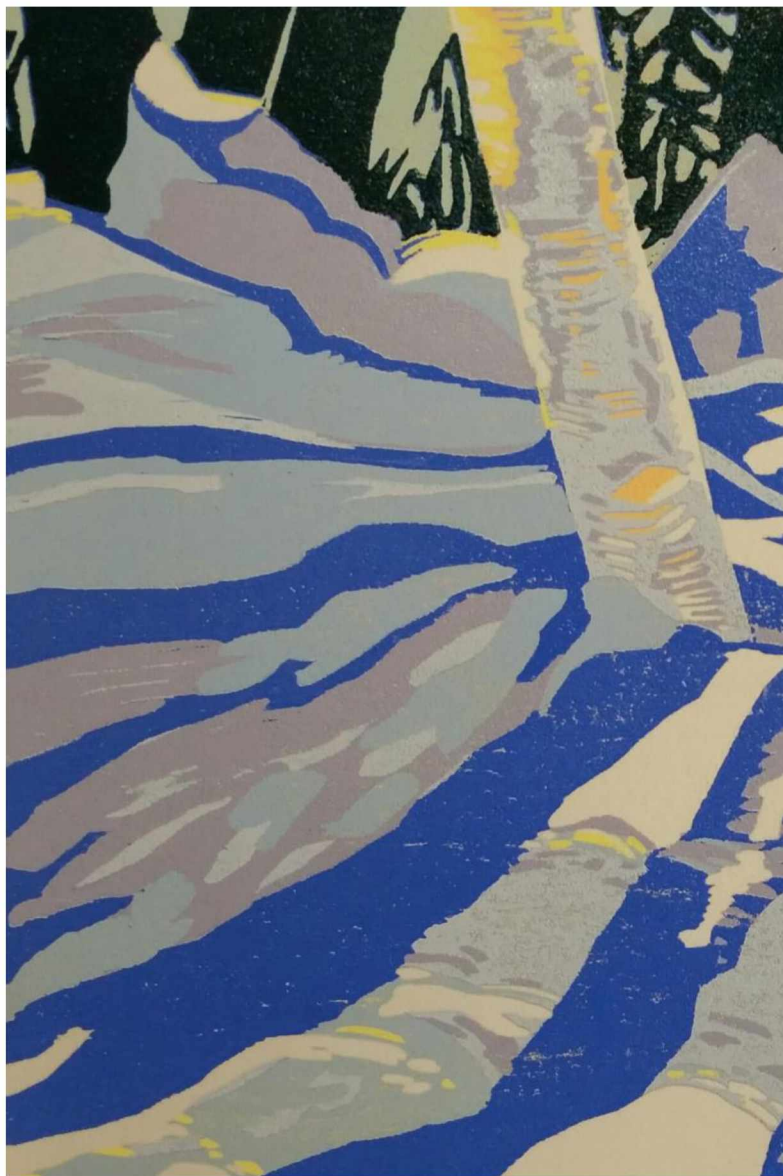
20. *Spring*/ 11 x 15 inches/ Serigraph/ 2015



Gail E. Friday/ MFA Packet/ Appendix: Images/ May 2015



21. *Long Shadows*/ 9 x 12 inches/ Reduction Woodcut/ 2014



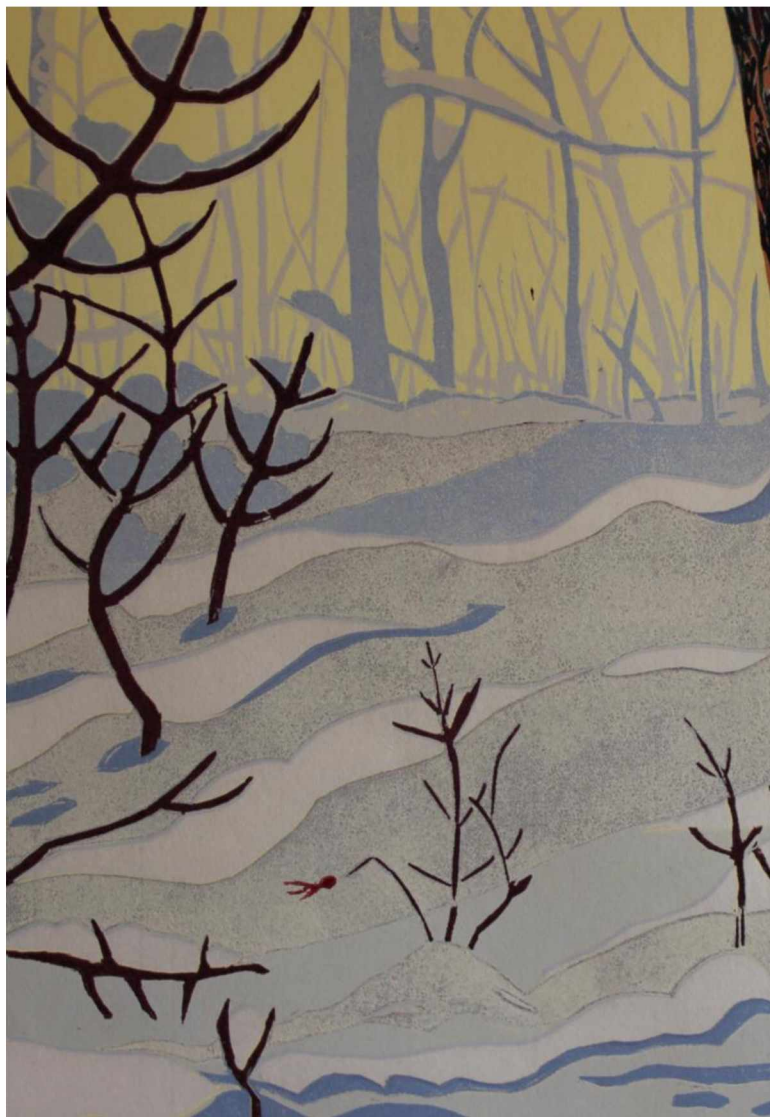
Gail E. Priddy/ MFA Packet/ Appendix: Images/ May 2015







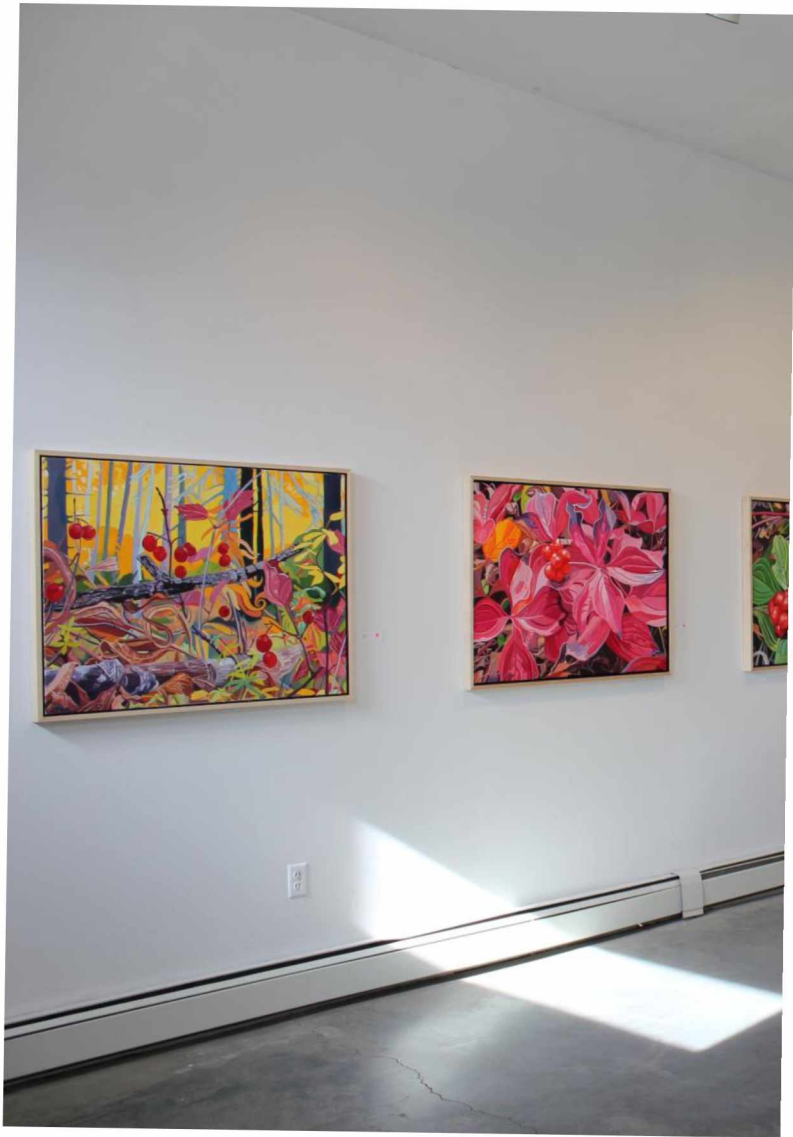
24. *Snowscape, December* / 12 x 16 inches/ Reduction Linocut/ 2014



Gail E. Priddy/ MFA Packet/ Appendix: Images/ May 2015



Images of Gallery





Images of Gallery





